

EAO Junior Committee Summer Camp 2023: Fostering Communication, Leadership, and Connections

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The fifth edition of the EAO Summer Camp took place in Lisbon, Portugal, from September 8–10, 2023. Organized by the EAO Junior Committee, this event successfully gathered young clinicians and researchers under the age of 40 years old.^{1–3} The camp focused on communication and leadership coaching, fostering networking opportunities, and featured social activities all set in a relaxed environment. Twenty-four participants from 18 different countries around the world were carefully selected to partake in the EAO Summer Camp (Fig 1).

Under the guidance of two experienced instructors (Miloš Stojilković Rolović and Radovan Perović), the 3-day training program was aimed at empowering the attendees, developing public speaking skills, and enhancing leadership through workshops and group projects, at the end of which personalized feedback would be delivered.



Fig 1 EAO Summer Camp 2023 participants (in yellow), Junior Committee members (in blue), and instructors.

List of Participants and Country of Residency

Fabiana Aellos	United States	Jeniffer Perussolo	United Kingdom
Georgios Antonoglou	United Kingdom	Stefano Pieralli	Germany
Karol Ali Apaza	Austria	Miha Pirc	Switzerland
Caroline Busch	Germany	Elisei Adelin Radu	Romania
Gülce Çakmak	Switzerland	Pierluigi Romandini	Switzerland
Ana Castro	Belgium	Alex Solderer	Italy
Nicolò Cavalli	Italy	Mariane Beatriz Sordi	United Kingdom
Laurent Detzen	France	Franz Strauss	Switzerland
Danijel Domic	Austria	Tsuyoshi Tanaka	United States
Artur Jozsef Kesztyüs	Hungary	Grazia Tommasato	Italy
Erik Klepsland Mauland	Norway	Daniel Vegh	Hungary
Kyung Chul Oh	South Korea (Republic of Korea)	Angela Vida Kalaw	United States

Junior Committee Members

Ignacio Sanz-Sánchez	Chair
Lucrezia Paternò Holtzman	Co-chair
Maria-Angeliki Alexopoulou	
Balazs Feher	
Nikolay Makarov	
João Pitta	
Pavel Scarlet	
Iva Milinković	Former member
Helena Francisco	Member of EAO Board of Directors

The training program's philosophy revolved around an "experiential-based education" methodology, emphasizing learning from each other's experiences through role play, presentations, and various tasks. Of course, networking and social activities were also primary objectives of this event. In fact, most attendees came from different countries of residence and did not know each other, yet the results after just 3 days of interactions were surprisingly significant in establishing connections.

This report aims to share the daily activities and participants, personal experiences during the 3-day course. For a scientific report of the EAO Summer Camp and an analysis on the importance of public speaking and leadership skills in the field of oral implantology, please refer to Paternó Holtzman et al.⁴

DAY 1

The activities started in the afternoon on Friday, September 8, 2023. Initially, the atmosphere was reserved as participants were not familiar with each other. After the Junior Committee welcomed participants and the workshops began, the speakers immediately engaged the participants in icebreaker activities aimed at building group cohesion, unity, and focus through the "pass the beat" game. In this game, everyone formed a circle, looked into the eyes of the closest person, concentrated, and decided when to clap hands together. Soon, everyone began to learn each other's names and started communicating.

The activities progressed with a simple yet essential task: trainers and attendees introduced themselves



Fig 2 Dinner on day 1. From left to right: Artur Jozsef Keszyüs, Kyung Chul Oh, Mariane Beatriz Sordi, Pierluigi Romandini, Angela Vida Kalaw, Daniel Vegh, and Alex Solderer.



Fig 3 Surf lesson on day 2. Participants following the surf instructor's guidance before practicing in the ocean.

one by one in front of the entire audience, giving the group the opportunity to get to know each other better. After these introductions, participants were asked to assess their satisfaction with their own presentations. Additionally, the trainers provided feedback and suggestions.

The importance of friendship was also emphasized. The camp attendees were encouraged to make new friends to foster a dynamic and enduring network that would facilitate future scientific exchange among participants. Each participant was assigned a “secret friend” to take care of them, ensuring they felt loved and motivated if needed. On the last day all the secret friends would be revealed.

The afternoon was very intense and after just 3 hours everybody felt like they had known each other a lifetime!

Participants shared their observations and experiences, and ground rules were established to ensure a safe and respectful environment since many colleagues with many different cultural backgrounds participated in the camp, notably with a guideline to keep conversations “dentistry free.”

As the day progressed, participants set personal goals for the training to identify expectations and learning needs, ranging from improvement of presentation skills and being more confident to establishing new friendships. Some also just wanted to enjoy Portugal and the surf lesson scheduled for the following day!

Evening sessions focused on public speaking techniques, emphasizing how to deliver a clear message to the audience. Valuable advice was given on starting a speech and maintaining good eye contact with the audience.

To prepare for the following days, participants formed four groups and brainstormed for a presentation to be delivered on the last day. They had to choose topics and determine the type of audience they intended to address.



Fig 4 Surf lesson on day 2. From left to right: Danijel Domic, Lucrezia Paternò Holtzman, Helena Francisco, Iva Milinković, Ignacio Sanz-Sánchez, and Pavel Scarlat.

The day concluded with a delicious dinner (Fig 2) and a few engaging activities, including the “two truths and a lie” game about participants’ lives and experiences. They also had a chance to express their feelings to their campmates, reinforcing the sense of group unity. The first night concluded with everyone going together to grab a drink by the ocean shore.

DAY 2

The second day started with an adventurous surf lesson at Dragão Vermelho beach—an opportunity to bond and challenge comfort zones while having fun all together (Figs 3 and 4). After an exciting morning, everyone enjoyed a leisurely lunch.

Back at the camp, the participants engaged as they did on day 1 in the “pass the beat,” followed by a

summary of the previous day's activities given by two of the participants.

The focus of the day shifted to refining the presentations of the four groups that had been formed the previous day. Participants were guided to delve deeper into their topics, define the message they wished to convey, and identify their target audience.

The afternoon continued with a physical activity class led by EAO Junior Committee president, Ignacio Sanz-Sánchez, that encouraged participants to express themselves physically while having fun together. Afterward, the speakers took over and conducted workshops aiding in eye contact and improvisation.

Evening brought more reflection and interaction. The group was divided into two columns, with one acting as the person and the other as the reflection in the mirror. This exercise helped to explore the dynamics of leadership and following the leader. Many found empowerment in leading, while others found comfort in following. There was a discussion about the pros and cons of leadership and following the leader. It became apparent that both roles had their unique strengths, emphasizing that effective teamwork requires a balance of both.

The day concluded with a dinner and a night out together, the right reward after a full day of activities! With smiles, laughs, and a harmonious atmosphere, the informal and relaxing mood fostered a friendly environment where everyone got along.

DAY 3

After a fast warm-up with the "pass the beat" exercise from the previous day, day 3 started with the summary of the previous day's seminar before the lunch break.

But now finally it was time for the presentations! Each group had 15 minutes to present the topic, followed by comments and feedback from the speakers, who also considered the target audience. The atmosphere in the room was focused, though not without frequent laughs!

Finally, the time everyone was waiting for had arrived: at last each participant's secret friend was revealed.

Everybody was called to stand up in front of the room and tried to guess who their secret friend was. The result was surprising; many people guessed, and others did not know who to choose since everybody was extremely kind and friendly. The vibes were really positive!

Before leaving for the airport, the last workshops were conducted. Once everyone had formed a circle, Milos Stojiljković Rolović started rubbing his hands together, and one by one everyone joined in. Then he made sounds with his fingers, and going around the circle, attendees had to follow him one by one. This exercise, familiar to all participants during these intense 3 days, is called "tropical rain." The meaning is clear—if the group is united, even a soft sound like rubbing hands can become loud!

Before the end, after some personal feedback, Milos Stojiljković Rolović and Radovan Perović had a last request. As the room fell quiet, it was now time to say the first word we had on our mind. The most commonly shared words were "family," "friendship," and "happiness." Thanks to Milos and Radovan, and thanks to EAO! These 3 days allowed us to meet all our goals while having a great time! Looking forward to the next events!

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Listen to the experiences of Jeniffer, Mariane, Daniel, and Miha.

APPENDIX



Appendix Fig 1 EAO Summer Camp 2023 participants. From left to right: Fabiana Aellos, Karol Ali Apaza, and Ana Castro.



Appendix Fig 2 EAO Summer Camp 2023 participants. From left to right: Daniel Vegh, Miha Pirc, and Ignacio Sanz-Sánchez.



Appendix Fig 3 EAO Summer Camp 2023 participants. From left to right: Kyung Chul Oh, Angela Vida Kalaw, and Tsuyoshi Tanaka.



Appendix Fig 4 EAO Summer Camp 2023 participants. From left to right: Alex Solderer, Caroline Busch, Georgios Antonoglou, Stefano Pieralli, Jeniffer Perussolo, and Pierluigi Romandini.



Appendix Fig 5 Group photo before starting the surf lesson on day 2.



Appendix Fig 6 Ocean view from Dragão Vermelho beach, Lisbon, Portugal.